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**PEOPLE**

**SPEAK**

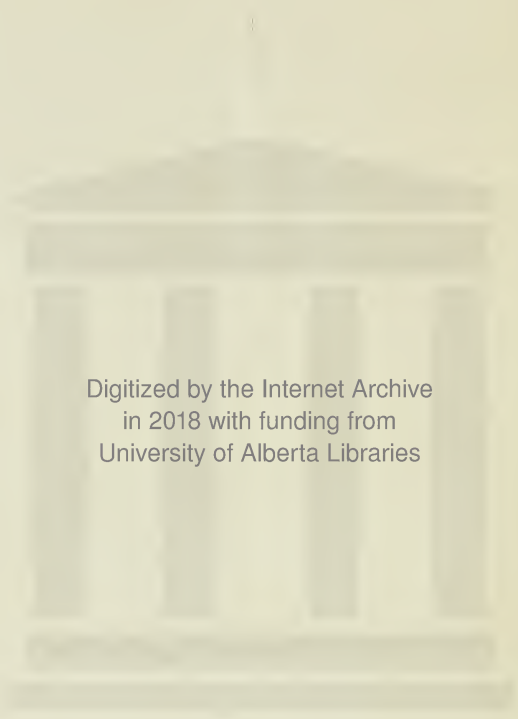
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**THE PEOPLE'S  
CONVENTION**

**THE OFFICIAL REPORT**

**3<sup>rd</sup>**



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# The People's Convention London, January 12th, 1941

at the  
Royal Hotel and Holborn Hall



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# INTRODUCTION

**T**HE great People's Convention met in London on January 12 and proved itself even greater than its most ardent supporters could have hoped or its most bitter enemies feared.

It surpassed all expectations alike in size, in character and in deep impressiveness. No one present could be in doubt that this event was something momentous in the history of our country; or that it was a beginning of still greater things to come; or that its effects would reach to the four corners of the world.

There were 2,234 delegates present, representing 1,200,000 people in 1,304 organisations. Of these, the great proportion were delegates representing working men and women. They numbered 1,136 and were sent to the Convention by 1,004,950 workers in trade unions, in factories and on jobs.

The great hall of the Royal Hotel, normally seating 1,700 was filled with not an inch to spare. At the last minute the Holborn Hall was taken to accommodate additional delegates, and the Holborn Hall was packed. The small Holborn Hall was taken, and that, too, was packed.

During the Convention, speakers referred to the "miracle of organisation" that had made it possible in so short a time to arrange such a gathering.

But it was no "miracle." It was the enthusiasm, courage and labour of people who worked like men inspired; it was the deep response to the call of the Convention; it was the burning desire of all those who support the Convention to carry it through to success, despite every difficulty and hazard, and every obstacle placed in the path by the enemies of the people.

Three weeks before the Convention was due, the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, where it had originally been scheduled, was destroyed in an air-raid. All the arrangements were thus rendered useless. A new hall had to be found, hospitality arranged for delegates, decorations constructed and, in fact, all the organisational steps had to be begun from scratch with only three weeks to go.

The difficulties were enormous. Hall after hall was visited, but for various reasons could not be used. With little more than one week to go the Royal Hotel in London was secured.

As soon as it was decided to hold the Convention in London an appeal was made for hospitality for the provincial delegates over the week-end, and for stewards and guides to meet them at the London railway termini on Saturday night to conduct them across London to their accommodation.

Within ten days more than sufficient offers of accommodation had been made and sufficient numbers of stewards and guides had volunteered.

Could any other movement produce such a spontaneous, warm-hearted desire on the part of its supporters to serve it? For here were the people of London, believing in the aims of the Convention, coming forward voluntarily to offer their homes, their time, and, if need be, to risk their lives, if an air raid was on, in the essential task of attending to the needs of the provincial delegates.

On Sunday morning, long before the Convention opened, queues stretched more than half a mile along the pavement around the Royal Hotel. In the long line could be heard the accents of working people from every region of Britain.

Miners from South Wales, Durham and Scotland, rubbed shoulders with men of the greatest engineering factories in the country. Housewives from the North greeted women representing shelter committees in London. And among them, in the quickly moving queues, were to be seen the uniform of workers now conscripted for the Army, whose voices were soon to be heard on the platform of the Convention itself.

Here, brought together by their common aspirations, needs and desires, were men from the bench, the shipyard and the pit, from transport and building, representatives from the universities, the sciences, literature, medicine and the arts. This was the deep impressiveness of the Convention.

Nobody could doubt the truth that here was represented all that was best, most vigorous and hopeful in the Labour and Trade Union Movement and in the professional world. The speeches that were made showed that in this Convention were gathered together men and women with the knowledge, energy and conviction, and the backing of their fellow workers which fit them to lead the fight for the workers' interests in the mighty campaign which will spring from the Convention.

Here, indeed, were the People. Here, indeed, was democracy in action.

**HARRY ADAMS, Chairman.**

# AGENDA

(NOTE: Owing to the large number of delegates, part had to be accommodated at the Holborn Hall, where Mr. Wm. Pearson, Chairman of the Lanarkshire Miners' Union, presided. The entire business of the Convention was repeated in each meeting hall, the main speeches being delivered in each place, reports given, and voting taken. In the section of this Report containing delegates' discussion, we include those made at each hall.)

## FIRST SESSION 10 a.m.

### 1. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS:

**HARRY ADAMS**

### 2. Election of Standing Orders Committee

*All amendments to resolutions, all questions, including speakers and all nominations for members of the National Committee, to be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee BY THE END OF THE FIRST SESSION.*

Election of Credentials Committee

### 3. Introduction of Policy and Programme Resolutions:

**D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.**

### 4. Discussion Open To Delegates

### 5. Reply: D. N. Pritt

### 6. Interim Report of Standing Orders Committee

## LUNCH INTERVAL

## SECOND SESSION 2.30 p.m.

### 1. Introduction of Organisation and Campaign Resolution:

**W. J. R. SQUANCE**

### 2. Discussion Open To Delegates

### 3. Reply: W. J. R. Squance

### 4. Amendments to Resolutions; Report of Standing Orders Committee; Adoption of Resolutions; Election of National Committee

### 5. Report of Credentials Committee

### 6. Chairman's Concluding Remarks





# ADDRESS BY HARRY ADAMS

## Chairman

**A**S a life-long trade unionist, Labour man and Co-operator, I am proud to welcome you to this great People's Convention. One hundred years ago the Chartists also gathered and fought for their six points, mainly political in content but linking up all the active and militant workers who were engaged in a violent struggle for economic improvement under hideous circumstances.

Chartism in those days was the expression of revolt against oppression but, although the movement had its effect upon trade unionism and general working-class activity for many years, it did not sustain itself as a force for many years.

We pay homage to the pioneers, and in this great Convention raise again the People's standard against all the brutal, ugly things that are inherent in the profit motive upon which production today, as it was a hundred years ago, is based.

### THIS IS OUR TASK

In contrast to Chartism, we are determined, as a result of our greater experience during the years that have passed, not to rest until we have achieved our task of building a new world. This is our task.

It will not and cannot be carried out by the ruling rich class however much they prate about it. Only the people in unity can develop the power and direction for the purpose. Our Convention here today is the instrument through which that power and direction will develop.

Our Convention has brought together representatives of many organisations of the Labour movement and of the widest sections

of the people. From the outset our movement has incurred the spite and hatred of the rich and their hangers-on. Demands have been made for our suppression, for our Convention to be prevented at all costs. This is the measure of their fear that their privileges and vested interests will be lost and the measure also of the strength we have already developed.

Because of our hatred of the ruling class and all that results from their greed and avarice at home and abroad, because we refuse to help them in their struggle for world supremacy against rival imperialisms, we are accused of assisting Hitler and Mussolini and their Fascist thugs and murderers. This is an abominable lie.

We hate all who oppress the common people. We remember, and shall never forget, the murder of our comrades in Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia, China and other countries and hope to see the day when the peoples of those countries will be avenged.

## THE RESPONSIBILITY

Many of the members of the present Cabinet are responsible for a foreign policy which assisted the German, Italian and Japanese Fascists in their aggression, helped to arm them and hoped to be able to make use of them.

We demanded that steps should be taken to stop this aggression in association with the Soviet Union always striving for peace and the freedom of all peoples.

Members of the present Government are responsible for refusing to take this, the only course of preventing further aggression and possibly of preserving peace. Now, having caused war as a result of their policy dictated by their hatred of Socialism, they coolly suggest that we should combine with them to drag them out of their mess.

We are accused by the official leadership of the T.U. and the Labour movement of refusing to implement the policy of resisting Fascist aggression and of running away when a fight is on.

This is another lie.

It is only fair to remind them that they made speeches up and down the country and passed resolutions at T.U.C. and Labour

Party Conferences, tabled motions in the House of Commons, condemning the Government's foreign policy and indicating that this policy would lead to war. If they forget these things and, on the specious plea that these same persons are now leading a fight for freedom and democracy, care to associate with them, that is their affair.

Let me also remind them that our movement was built up to fight against their new-found friends who represent the class that persecuted our forbears for daring to form trade unions, and have resisted all our attempts to obtain freedom, the class against whom we have to struggle for increases of wages and to obtain improvements in working and living conditions. Have they forgotten the Trades Union and Disputes Act, the vicious wages cuts of 1931, the Means Test and all the misery and destitution resulting from this and other measures? We have not and shall not. We are astounded that one who has been prominent in our movement for many years, who I remember as a fellow delegate representing another union at the 1915 Bristol T.U.C., being looked upon as a white hope of Labour, making a statement to the effect that the British Empire represented a hundred years of developing freedom. All the freedom that exists for the common people has been won as a result of struggle by the organised workers.

They may care to use their ability and experience gained in the Labour movement to support British imperialism, caught in the meshes of its own folly, but we do not.

Despite all attempts to make the people believe that we are a small disgruntled minority rebelling against the wishes of the rank and file of the Labour movement, we point to the indisputable support, as evidenced by the Convention, that we have from the men and women in the factories and shops, mines, fields, building contracts, from our friends in the arts and sciences, from all true lovers of peace and progress.

## **THE START OF THE CONVENTION**

The mighty movement of popular anger surged forward last year after exposure of ruling class incompetence and bankruptcy as shown in Norway and at Dunkirk in the corruption of war

profiteering and the neglect of the needs of the people. This was the starting point of the People's Convention movement.

The movement for the People's Convention developed from within the Labour Party. Along with other members of the Labour Party who were filled with shame and disgust at the Bournemouth Conference policy of linking up with capitalists and landlords, I took part in conversations from last May to July which led to the formation of a provisional committee. In July we organised, in co-operation with the Hammersmith Trades and Labour Council, a conference to demand the removal of the Men of Munich. The amazing response to the conference showed the rising tide of popular feeling. Arising from this conference our committee was enlarged and similar conferences were held all over the country.

The demand was voiced on all sides for a great National Conference to lead and organise the fight for a Government really representative of the people. Our London Committee took on



**Mr. Harry Adams, Chairman, opening the Convention.**

the responsibility of preparing the way for this. In September the Manifesto was issued over the signatures of 500 leading and representative people in all parts of the country. In this way the People's Convention movement was born.

This great People's Convention is being held for the purpose of reviving the fighting spirit of our people, to revitalise the organs of struggle against the ruling class of this country and in company with the peoples of all other capitalist countries to fight against the ruling class of all countries for peace and progress.

Outside of the great Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the world has appeared to develop a madness. War, murder, bestiality has been the order of the day. This has not been caused by mere moral backsliding, it is the direct outcome of a system of production based upon the ownership by a few of land and the means of production leading to rivalries between competing groups of owners in different countries. And because the workers and peasants, technicians and scientists, have produced in such plenty and have received in wages insufficient to enable them, despite their needs, to take advantage of their productivity, the competing groups of owners go to war with each other to obtain new markets.

## **PROFITS COME FIRST**

In every direction profits of the rich are the first consideration of this Government and the addition of a handful of Labour leaders can make no essential difference to the workers.

We cannot have food, clothing, heat or any other need unless someone makes a profit out of its production or transport.

Soldiers, sailors and airmen cannot have the means of attack or defence unless profits are the first consideration.

In fact, they will not even build an air raid shelter unless there is profit to be made.

But the persons making the largest profits are shouting the loudest about freedom and democracy!

This hunt for profits has now brought about an incredible state of chaos in the main industries of this country and a food shortage of alarming proportions.



The rail companies suck up huge, state-guaranteed profits but the transport system is in a rotten state of disorganisation. Many coalfields are becoming derelict, thousands of miners are unemployed, but in the big towns and homes of the workers there is a grave shortage of coal. The inefficiency in the engineering industry is notorious and will remain so while the racket of Government contracts at 10 per cent plus costs continues. Textile workers lose their jobs because of Government orders restricting production. There are still nearly 800,000 unemployed.

This is Britain today, a paradise for profiteers, ruled by a Government that although it has armed itself with full Emergency Powers refuses to use them against vested interests. There is much talk about the coming arrests of shop stewards, never a word about the necessity of arresting profiteers. Our Convention demands action and the taking over of the main industries in the interests of the people. I welcome the campaign of the South Wales Miners' Federation demanding the production and distribution of coal in the interests of the people and I hope that the demand of the M.F.G.B. for the nationalisation of the coal industry will be followed by vigorous action.

## **THE IRON RATION POLICY**

No change will take place unless the people fight for it. These things are not the result of an evil fate, they are the fruits of the conscious actions of the ruling class. The rise in the cost of living and the serious shortage of essential foodstuffs are due to the policy of this class, who themselves make mockery of the present form of rationing. While working women seek in vain for the things they need, the luxury shops are stocked with everything that money can buy, and the great hotels and restaurants continue to do a roaring trade.

This is all part of the policy to reduce the workers to an "iron ration" while at the same time preparing to fasten the chains of industrial conscription upon them.

The fight over wages and trade union rights has now come to a head. The refusal of the engineers' demands on the grounds of "national interests" is a challenge to all workers, a declaration



Some of the delegates at the Convention.

of war on wages that must be answered by the might of trade union organisation backed by shop stewards everywhere.

It is time to call a halt and to end all this hypocritical talk about "equality of sacrifice." The longer the war lasts, the greater the profits of the capitalists and the greater the sacrifice by the workers. If we permit the Labour and Trade Union movement to become weaker the less fitted it will be to fight for the restoration of our rights and to effect improved conditions. The struggle cannot be laid down and taken up later on.

There is no doubt that the following-out of the policy of the present Government means slaughter on a world scale, all talk of a new world notwithstanding. This talk is mere eyewash and only the politically innocent can be taken in by such phrasemongering. A capitalist government in power when hostilities cease means that this system will continue and that the trade unions having been subordinated to the prosecution of the war will be unable to fight for the interests of the workers.

Government spokesmen are claiming credit for whatever improvements have been made in shelter protection, re-housing and assistance of victims of air warfare. The facts are that what has been done has resulted from the pressure of an angry people.

The position that obtains in London even now, in Coventry, Birmingham, Bristol, Sheffield and Southampton, is a terrific condemnation of their callous attitude towards the common people.

## WAR AND PEACE AIMS

Much has been said and written lately about the Government's war and peace aims. The first one seems to be the maintenance of the Empire and the profit-making system. Almost every spokesman for the Government has referred to the maintenance of the Empire, to imperial interests, and just recently we have heard of the "Imperial Army of the Nile." What does this indicate if not that what we know of Empire and imperialism is to remain after the bloodshed ceases. India denied its independence, where an attempt to exercise freedom of speech leads to jail, where millions are exploited for the profits of British and native rulers and investors.

Nigeria, where women protesting against reduction of wages were shot. Gambia, where an attempt was made to smash the trade unions because the organised workers exercised their rights to strike.

Kenya, where natives protesting against the robbery of their land and the imposition of a Poll Tax were imprisoned or transported unless they agreed to work for those who robbed them.

West Indies, where workers' leaders were transported because of labour disputes arising out of low wages and semi-slavery.

The Ministry of Information have been trying desperately hard to cover all this up by the use of grandiloquent language by referring to this Empire as a Commonwealth of Nations and putting over the dope that the British Government does not take a penny from all these people, that monies raised by taxation of British people are being used for education and social welfare of the native people.



They forget to say, or more correctly, deliberately fail to disclose, that the same class that control Britain extract hundreds of millions of pounds in the shape of profits, leaving the inhabitants of those countries in a state of semi-starvation.

We refuse to assist in this disreputable and scandalous state of affairs. Hitler and Musolini may use this denunciation of our rulers for their own purpose, but the same story can be told of the Italian Empire and the criminal record of German imperialism is known to all. And as for French colonisation I have seen some of the results myself in Algeria.

I have, fortunately, also seen the reverse side, what can be done by the people when they have rid themselves of their oppressors, as a result of my visit to the great Socialist Soviet Union.

Another plank in this wonderful programme, judging by statements made by members of the Government, indicates that the conditions existing in German occupied countries before the war are to be restored.

Is this a fight for democracy?

## **OUR RULERS AND DEMOCRACY**

Do our ruling class stand for democracy? Let Spain, India, the Colonies, China give the answer. What our ruling class understand by democracy is: "Freedom to use their economic and political power to preserve their right to make profits by exploiting the labour power of those who must work to live."

The country on behalf of whom the war was officially declared, Poland, was a semi-Fascist state.

The country with whom the Government were co-operating, France, had imprisoned or shut up in concentration camps thousands of organised workers and their leaders.

The gangs of individuals who form the so-called Governments of Nazi conquered countries, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland, France, Norway, here and recognised by our Government, are mainly composed of capitalists, landlords, financiers and militarists.

The heroism displayed in this war, whether on land or sea or in the air, by members of the class that works for wages or salaries, all the sacrifices and suffering entailed in such episodes as Norway and Dunkirk have been in vain. They have fallen victims to the blunders and inefficiency of the profit-makers.

We are proud of our heroes, whether they be in the armed forces or civil defence organisations, and we resent the exploitation of such courage and devotion by those responsible for the war in an attempt to bolster up the crumbling edifice of profit and reaction.

Our people have always shown courage even in peace in dealing with disasters in industry and on the railways and roads, caused mainly by the profit motive in industry.

We look for the time when our comrades in uniform will consciously display their heroism and make their sacrifices for change to a sane system of society.

It is not true that peace means surrender to Fascism. A peace that would lead to the freedom of all peoples can be achieved, but this Government will never make such proposals because:

- (a) Their pledge to restore the previous Governments in the conquered countries will involve the continuance of capitalism and landlordism and semi-Fascism and in some cases hostility to the Soviet Union.
- (b) They would not be willing to grant independence to their own subject peoples, India and Africa, and consequently could or would not assist the subject races of other empires.

## A PEOPLE'S PEACE

But a People's Government could formulate peace proposals and while effectively defending us against foreign imperialism, could associate with the Soviet Union in an effort for a real and enduring peace, and could appeal to the people of the conquered countries to revolt against their oppressors and to form their own People's Governments. It would grant complete independence to all subject races within the Empire and bring about a peace which would enable all peoples to work out their own

destiny in their own way. Such a peace would also end the causes of war.

These are the things that the Convention stands for. Today you will take important, vital decisions, but I ask you not to look upon the Convention as an end in itself.

## THE NEXT STAGE

We are not going to produce any miracles here, but we are going, today, to forge the weapons that will equip us all for the next stage of the fight.

It will be a hard fight. The Convention is only the beginning of a new round of titanic struggles to win the mass of the people, especially those in the factories and trade unions in full support of its policy, the policy of those who stand for life, as against those who can only organise death, those who want peace and not war, those who are for the interests of the poor against the rich.

Let the policy decided by this Convention be made known in every factory, mine, mill, shipyard, field, office and barracks in Britain; in every trade union branch, trade union district committee, trades council, local Labour Party, Co-operative Guilds, and all professional organisations.

Let it be made known from Land's End to John O'Groats.

See that the Convention proceedings and final decisions are reported on through the medium of mass meetings, conferences and demonstrations. Let us flood the country with leaflets and pamphlets, explaining our policy to the millions of people who eagerly await the outcome of our Convention.

On every one of us present at this Convention, a serious responsibility rests, it is that of setting a personal example in the way we now work, to secure victory for the Convention policy.

## YOU HAVE THE POWER

Especially do I appeal to shop stewards, trade union branch secretaries, delegates to trades councils—you who represent the real life-blood of the Labour movement, who have no thoughts of anything but selfless service to the people. You hold the key

positions. You have mass influence in the decisive places; you have the power to change things. Be proud of that power and proud to use it.

It is a great pleasure also to see so many representatives of the professional workers here, as growing evidence of the real unity between the workers by hand and brain that is being forged in indissoluble links that augurs well for our future work.

You, too, have a special part to play in popularising our Convention amongst the office and professional people, and by using your talents in writing, song, story, picture and music to help organise the people for a new People's Government and a new life.

We welcome the various organisations, Co-operative Guilds, Women's Committees, Shelter Committees, Tenants' Committees, etc., etc.

All together we, here, represent mighty forces.

Let mass action develop as a result of the great activity that together we are now going to carry through.

Fight for the People's Government which will obtain for the common people all that life and endeavour were meant to achieve.

We can do this. Why? Because we are of the people, belong to them, have faith in them, and because we fight for and with them.

With pride, confidence and the surety of victory for the British people over all their enemies at home and abroad, I declare this great People's Convention open.

# Introduction to Policy and Programme Resolution

D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

**T**HIS is a historic occasion, and I am honoured to address the first meeting of the People's Convention, a great gathering of delegates of the people of Britain who have come together to express in a clear Programme of Action their firm will to end the evils of the times and to found a happier and a better world for themselves and their children.

The resolution which I move is designed to set out in summary form the aims and objects which will be the basis of the next stage of our campaign, in which we shall carry on the fight both over the immediate and specific grievances and needs of the people and on the whole programme of the People's Government and the People's Peace.

In that resolution you will see the Eight Points which you are asked to accept and support.

## THE EIGHT POINTS

- (1) To raise the living standards of the people, including wages, pay of armed and civil defence forces, dependants' allowances, all pensions, compensation, insurance and unemployment allowances, and the restoration and extension of educational facilities.

- (2) Adequate A.R.P., bomb-proof shelters, and prompt and effective provision for all the needs of air raid victims, including rehousing and full and immediate compensation.
- (3) Restoration, safeguarding and extension of all Trade Union rights, and democratic rights and civil liberties. Effective democratic rights for members of the armed forces.
- (4) Emergency powers to be used to take over the banks, land, transport, armaments and other large industries, in order to organise our economic life in the interests of the people.
- (5) National Independence for India; the right of all colonial peoples to determine their own destiny; and the ending of enforced partition of Ireland.
- (6) Friendship with the U.S.S.R.
- (7) A People's Government truly representative of the working people, and able to command the confidence of working people throughout the world.
- (8) A People's Peace, won by the working people of all countries and based on the right of all peoples to determine their own destiny.

## THE EVILS OF THE TIME

What are the evils against which we have to fight under this eight-point programme? They are manifold; they are grievous; they are curable and therefore unnecessary. We, the workers of the Western world in the 20th century, are a generation plunged by a rotten and dying system into wars which are not of our making, when we desire only peace and have no quarrel with our fellow workers. We are a generation held in the bondage of unemployment, semi-starvation, misery and insecurity, when the intelligent application of modern productive power could make us all free and prosperous, when the very fruits of the earth are clamouring so loudly for the privilege of enriching our lives that their masters—and ours—can silence them only by actual destruction. The present war has intensified all these evils and brought us to a position in which urgent action is necessary.



## WE INDICT THE GOVERNMENT

We indict the present Government, the representatives of property and class interests, whose rule is responsible for these wars, these miseries, this waste, this tragedy. This Government and the ruling class from which it is drawn maintain an anti-democratic economy within the forms of political democracy, and can never serve any interests but their own.

Big business, Tory reaction, war profiteering, are what they understand, what they support, what supports them. The present Parliament, its life artificially prolonged by its own Act, was elected to support Mr. Baldwin in a policy of collective security under the League of Nations—an admitted swindle; it was never representative of public feeling and is now completely divorced from it. The policy and the essential characteristics of the Government have not been altered one iota by taking into its coalition a few Labour leaders.

Such a government of necessity pursues imperialist war aims, for it is drawn from the class which grows rich on the dividends of Empire. It is and it must be opposed to freedom and democracy in India and the Colonies, for such blessings would cut off its tribute and diminish its power. It supports, and cannot but support, profiteering and the destruction of the people's living standards, for it knows no way of life but profit-seeking and sees in any improvement of popular standards at once a lessening of its own wealth and a threat to its own power. The only fruits of its activities are economic bankruptcy and chaos. Wherever we look—at transport, coal, food, or engineering—we see the desperate position to which the great monopolies reduce us and their complete incapacity to organise production. And to meet the crisis and the confusion which they themselves have created, they can and do demand their own maintenance in power and unlimited sacrifices from the people; standards of living, wage rates, trade union conditions, all must go, and industrial compulsion must be accepted, to serve their interests and make up for their inefficiency, whilst they maintain their own standards unimpaired and seek ever-increased profits. In short, they are moving steadily all along the line towards a general compulsory system of a Fascist pattern.

From all this we must take a most serious warning. Unless we make a stand against this class and this Government, they will drive forward to a full Fascist system.

## OUR PROGRAMME

It is the threat of this system and the evils of this class rule that our programme is designed to meet. What is the essence of our programme? I think I can state it under three heads: the service of the real needs of the people; a genuine democracy; and the achievement of a real peace.

On the first point, we believe that the working people of this country can and must defeat the present attack on their standards, their wages, their rights and their liberties. The fights for wages and trade union conditions are now the very centre of the battle. It is typical that the Government should encourage the engineering employers to reject totally the engineers' claim for an increase of 3d. an hour in wages, alleging that it is against the national interest, whilst they freely concede to the pampered railway companies increases of 10 per cent and of 6½ per cent. We must fight not only for wages and conditions, but for dependants' allowances, compensation, unemployment payments, pensions and all similar rights. To secure justice for the workers under all these heads, every selfish opposing interest must be swept aside. We are proposing in our 4th point to use the Emergency Powers to destroy the grip of vested interests. Banks, transport, mining, all the great industries, must serve the whole people and not directors, shareholders, or moneylenders. It must no longer be possible for the rich to be well fed whilst the mass hunger, or for the necessities of life to go unrationed to the highest bidder and then to disappear from the market when maximum prices are fixed.

Such vital public services as A.R.P. must be no longer scamped or neglected. If the shelters now provided are so good that those who complain are to be called "Fifth Columnists," let our Cabinet Ministers spend all their nights in these shelters. But if they are not good enough for them, they are not good enough for the British people who are carrying them on their backs. Let





D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P., at the rostrum, introducing Resolution on Policy and Programme. On the platform, Dr. Harold Moody (League of Coloured People) and Mr. B. Bradley, National Organiser (right).



(Left) Mrs. Robinson, Barrow-in-Furness Co-operative Party, made a strong attack on Lord Woolton's Food Policy; (right) Miss Selson, representing University Labour Federation.

those who chatter of "Fifth Columns" look into their history; they will find that by its definition the "Fifth Column" consisted of upper-class traitors to the cause of the people.

In order thus to serve the needs of the people and to free their strength to fight their own battles, we must achieve the second point—the establishment of real democracy. To submit for one moment to the present Government's policy of the steady destruction of all democratic rights in the interests of big monopolies would be fatal. Democratic rights must, on the contrary, be extended. The power of money must end. No strings must tie governments to finance or to industrial or landed interests. Men must be free to speak and write not merely without losing their liberty but without losing their jobs. And the Indian and Colonial peoples must be free, too, to determine their own destinies; we cannot be free whilst we oppress others.

## WAR AND PEACE

But the greatest single point is the achievement of peace. We, and we alone, have a policy for peace. Our policy is to offer to the peoples of the enemy a peace of no annexations and no reparations or indemnities, with liberty to all peoples to determine their own destiny. We know that the German people, freed from the fears based on the declarations of British propagandists, that if they are defeated their country will be dismembered and they will be taxed, humiliated, and oppressed, will no longer be willing to fight and suffer for Hitler's aims but will accept such an offer if it be made by a People's Government in whom they can have confidence. A People's Government, demonstrating its sincerity by a simultaneous offer of self-determination to the peoples of India and the Colonies, could be trusted by the German peoples. But no such offer could be made by our present Government.

Its acceptance by the German people would mean an end of Hitler and the Nazis and would also mean that peace could be made without sowing, in revenge or injustice or starvation, the seeds of a third World War. No other policy offers any hope of avoiding an early return to war, and our present Government has no policy at all, except that of fighting to the bitter end—which

will be literally an end to millions and bitter for many millions more, and would make further war to other bitter ends inevitable.

Once peace between the peoples on such terms as these is achieved, we shall be a long step forward to a new social order in which peace can be founded on such a secure footing that the very name of war will be forgotten.

## OUR CRITICS

I must mention at this point the violent attacks which have been made on our programme. We make no complaint. Attacks are the measure of our success. But some of them are worth answering, for to answer them illustrates the strength of our arguments.

It is said, to begin with, that our programme cuts across the policy and principles of the Labour Party, that we are "against the Labour Party." Surely it does not cut across Labour policy and principles to fight for the people's standard of living, for freedom of speech, for trade union rights, for working-class power, for peace? If it does, I spent over twenty years in the Labour Party without discovering it. If it does, it were better that that party had never been born! But, of course, it does not; all that cuts across Labour policy and principles is the linking up of its leaders with their class enemies. As for the suggestion that we are "against the Labour Party," the best answer is that the overwhelming mass of our support comes from the best elements of the rank and file of the Labour Party; they are not the first army that has proved better than its leaders. We cannot abandon the fight because the leaders are not following, but we seek—and not in vain—the support of both the organisations and the rank and file of the Labour Party.

Then some of the more reckless and foolish of our enemies suggest that we are "pro-Hitler." In their recklessness and folly, they thereby make a present to Goebbels of a nice argument; he can say: 'I see that this movement is making great headway and, I am told, that it is pro-Hitler. Therefore I claim that there are important elements of the British working class that favour

Hitler." These critics are merely liars. "Pro-Hitler," indeed! We have been enemies of Hitler and his system for years, whilst these critics—Ministers, Press Lords, bankers, industrial bosses—have been licking his boots, endorsing his submarines, financing him, building up his strength, presenting him with one country after another, with one armament factory after another. It was of them it was said that they took their week-ends in the country whilst their friend Hitler took his countries at the week-end! Whilst they were behaving like that, I myself was excluded from Germany by Hitler's orders seven years ago, and attacked by the Government and even Transport House for investigating and reporting what all know now to be the truth about him; and my friends on this platform have records as good as, or better, than mine. These accusations must be what the students of psychology call "defence-mechanisms" of uneasy consciences. And, finally, the criticism is put forward that you cannot change the Government in war-time, for you would thus let in Hitler! What an argument! However bad a government may be at a time when the future of the world is being decided, and the need for the best government is greater than ever before, you are asked to leave it alone! The truth is that, whether for war or for peace, we cannot afford to have anything but a government based on the people, in whom the people can have confidence, who would not ask the people to suffer except in the people's own cause, and would suffer equally with them. The terrible lesson of France shows us what happens when freedom to criticise and change the Government is withdrawn. Where are the French Labour leaders who—with the approval of some of our Labour leaders—proudly proclaimed that "there is no more class war now" as they put their heads in the jaws of their class enemies? Some are in exile, some in concentration camps, some in the Vichy Government.

## OUR ADVANCE

That is our case, our programme, our battle. We know from countless meetings in the country—small, businesslike propaganda meetings, large public meetings, mammoth demonstrations—and from the appointments and voting of numerous delegations



in the face of the threats, boycotts and persecutions of Whitehall and Transport House, how warmly and swiftly it is welcomed in all parts of the country and in most classes of the community. It is our plain and simple duty now to carry on our campaign by every means, by fighting both on immediate issues and on our basic political aim, until we achieve the establishment of a People's Government. Another resolution will be put before you on this aspect of the fight.

I am proud to be in this struggle and of this struggle. In a world of great horror we have a firm foundation of great hope. We have the material to build a world of peace and beauty and happiness, a new social order. We have the skill, the intelligence, and the power to build it. We are rapidly gaining confidence in that power, the will to use it and to win. We shall build a new world, as our Soviet comrades built; but, with our material advantages and the experiences of the last twenty years, we shall build even better than they did, and with less toil and suffering.

We appeal to all working men and women, to all Socialists, to all trade unionists and Co-operators, to all democrats and anti-Fascists, to all men and women of good will. We call on them to unite now in this great crisis and to fight shoulder to shoulder for our programme which gives us the only concrete policy that can meet the urgent needs of today and can get rid of the present Government and replace it by a People's Government. Only such a government can end this war and lead us out of chaos, misery and destruction into a better future.

# Introduction to Organisation & Campaign Resolution

W. J. R. SQUANCE

**A**T this morning's session you considered the Policy and Programme of the People's Convention. This afternoon we have to consider how to organise and extend the mighty movement of the people for the realisation of this programme and policy. How best to implement this therefore becomes our bounden duty and responsibility; how best to forge a mighty weapon; to launch a nation-wide campaign, within and without existing organisations and to secure power for a People's Government pledged to give the country a lead on how to secure peace and create fundamental changes in our social system based on human happiness and progress, is our immediate task.

We must therefore fashion the policy and activities of this People's Convention so as to give it greater importance than a popular, vast, inspiring gathering for specific objectives, and to transform it into a real living instrument of life; determined at all costs, against all odds and difficulties, to fight for the immediate interests of the people, never resting until success is achieved, and giving momentum to the march of humanity towards its new goal of peace and plenty, and the freedom of all peoples to enjoy this new life in full.

## ORGANISE THE UNITED MOVEMENT OF THE PEOPLE

Fortified by the confidence and decisions of this truly representative gathering, our first step is to organise the workers for struggle, to inspire them to become doughty fighters of a worthy

cause; to arouse and educate them in a spirit of class-conscious self-confidence, in the faith which inspired the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the pioneers of our great Trades Unions, Co-operative and Labour Movements.

Representatives of all sections of the community are gathered in this great Convention, all of whom are fully conscious of the true character of present-day society and the magnitude of the struggle to effect the necessary changes essential to human progress; but they are equally convinced of the indestructibility of their ideals and their principles. In the light of this knowledge, strengthened by loyalty, confidence and determination to win, as our watchwords, we unhesitatingly declare, as paragraph 3 of the resolution says:

“that a People’s Government can and will be secured by the united and determined efforts of the working class and progressive people. To this end we pledge ourselves to organise the united mass movement of the people in the struggle for the aims contained in our programme and to win our organisations for full support.”

In paragraph 3 we undertake to work to

“strengthen and revitalise the Trade Union Movement. To maintain trade union democracy, to end the policy of subordinating the interests of the working class to the interests of the Government and the employers, and to assist every effort of the trade unions for the betterment of working-class standards, the express purpose for which they were brought into existence. To strengthen and revitalise the Trades Councils in order that they will be effective co-ordinating bodies in every locality for the Trade Union Movement.”

On these fundamental issues we do not seek to destroy existing organisations; usurp their authority; nor supersede useful machinery or negotiations. On the contrary, we seek only to inspire new life and confidence into these movements, and by appealing for unity and solidarity, combine the endeavours of all sections in the common fight to impose their majority will on the ruling classes and thus to secure their own government.

In this direction the policy of class collaboration must give way to one of struggle. This policy of class collaboration, so disastrous in times of peace, has, in war, with the aid of restrictive legislation, led to the denial of the right to strike; seriously challenged the right of collective bargaining and Trade Union recognition in many places; seriously interfered with and prevented the free election of officials and delegates and the holding of rank and file conferences in others; and, in divers ways, Trade Union democracy is so seriously jeopardised that the movement itself is threatened with stagnation and death, and the work of over 100 years of organised effort is in danger of being sacrificed. The call to action is timely and urgent. The difficulty of delivering our message and mobilising effectively our forces remains an acute problem which must be seriously tackled to ensure success.

## NEW METHODS

In these days of excessive overtime, blackout and other abnormal conditions, the usual channels of business and special meetings are seriously impaired. The experiment of holding Saturday afternoon and Sunday meetings has only been partially successful, attendances are poor. In fact, in many places Trade Union branch meetings do not function properly and contact with the ordinary member is extremely difficult, if not impossible. The branch room must again become the forum of workers, but new methods must also be introduced.

The new policy must be "contact on the job"; in the trains to and from work; by arranging talks in your homes; by becoming busy in air raid shelters, on railway platforms and in shopping centres; in short, wherever men and women meet and afford facilities for discussion, our message must become the topic. I well recall that in the years of militant Trade Union activities, the most prompt and successful meetings were those convened on the job, *e.g.*, the pithead and the dockside. These are the reasons we declare in our resolution the urgent need of

"assisting to build up and extend the Shop Stewards' and workshop organisation," because "we recognise that the hands of the workers will be strengthened by a most powerful weapon of struggle."



These methods of strengthening the Trade Union sections should be equally effective if applied in the case of Trades Councils and Labour Parties and Co-operative Parties and Guilds with whom we seek co-operation and the opportunity to assist in every form of working-class struggle for improvement of wages, conditions and standards of life.

## THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Likewise we will work to strengthen the Co-operative Movement as the means of safeguarding supplies of essential commodities for the people and combating profiteering. As in the 1914-18 war, when a small section of the community enhanced their private fortunes by £5,069 million sterling, profiteering in this war proceeds apace, notwithstanding the claim of equal sacrifice of all classes. This fact alone shows that the present Government represents the interests of the rich and desires to place all the burdens of the war upon the people.

The Co-operative Movement, born in a period of great struggle of the people—known as the “hungry forties”—extends into the homes of millions of our people. It is a movement that has knowledge of the problems of poverty; is conversant with the lives of ordinary citizens; appreciates their needs and aspirations; recognises the bitter struggle of past generations to improve their standards of life; and, generally, the urgency of maintaining the principles of personal liberty, freedom and democracy.

Important sections of this great Movement are represented at this gathering. This is not only evidence of their deep sympathy and support, but it emphasises also the fact that they are already on the march with us towards a new social order.

By the implementation of our Programme we believe that the interests of the small shopkeeper, small farmer and consumer can be safeguarded. Moreover, we consider that such a mighty movement offers new and better opportunities, and ensures security and the possibility of a full, free and happy life for all, guaranteed by a People's Government and a People's Peace.

Towards this end, in the terms of the resolution, we pledge ourselves to achieve unity of the organised working class and all progressive people—representing the interests of all working men

and women, socialists, trade unionists, and co-operators; professional and intellectual workers, small shopkeepers, small business men and farmers; democrats and anti-fascists in a mighty movement for a People's Government. To seek co-operation with all progressive associations and organisations for this purpose.

## THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Next comes your important task to elect a National Committee with full responsibility to conduct the campaign envisaged in this and the previous resolution.

Such a campaign as ours in these difficult days is no mean responsibility; its success depends absolutely upon the volume of work put in, individually and collectively; it requires men of steady resolve; men who fully appreciate the depths of the problems, and who are determined to win out, regardless of effort.



(Left) Mr. Harry Adams; (right) Mr. W. J. R. Squance, Vice-Chairman of the Convention.

It will need courage, loyalty, hard and bitter struggle against great odds which team-work, loyal co-operation and conviction of the right of your cause alone can bring victory.

In harness, the National Committee will endeavour to implement the aims and aspirations of the millions of fellow-citizens now struggling for a new England and a better system of society. Such a worthy object merits the loyalty and best action of all those honoured by appointment whose only reward in return for faithful service is hard work, little rest, much anxiety and grave responsibility. Our ultimate goal is worthy of all this. I am, however, confident that when elected, your National Committee, fully conscious of the great trust and confidence imposed upon them, will serve honourably, faithfully and well.

Under the direction of the National Committee, Regional Committees will have the responsibility of assisting in developing the campaign in the localities. These Regional Committees will be elected on the broadest possible basis at Regional People's Conventions. Hearty co-operation and loyalty between the National Committee and the Regional Committees will ensure smooth working and bring the best results.

## FINANCIAL NEEDS

All these activities that I have mentioned cost money. To keep the life of our movement healthy and strong, money must be regarded as the sinews of war and not as a matter of secondary importance. Today, this is one of our greatest problems, and as we develop, the financial needs will become greater.

Our present financial arrangements provide for one-third of all collections at meetings and for half the profits from sales of literature, badges, etc., to be forwarded to the National Office.

These methods for financing a movement such as the People's Convention are far too precarious to be permitted to continue, and the Convention must instruct the National Committee to establish a definite policy and instructions for the guidance of all concerned. Serious consideration has already been given to this urgent matter by the Finance Committee, whose report is here for your information.

Last, but by no means least important, is the future of this vast assembly of representatives—the Convention, of which your resolution definitely states that this First Session of the People's Convention will stand adjourned, to be recalled in order to carry forward the campaign for a People's Government.

Such a decision, if adopted, leaves this great representative gathering the custodians of future policy and activities; the organisers of the struggle of the people to safeguard their standards of life, maintain democracy, and to do all such other things as may be deemed necessary to implement the eight articles of our programme and thus secure for the people the right to a full, free and happy life in a land of Peace and Plenty. This is true Democracy and a goal worth striving for.

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An honoured visitor, Indra Nehru, daughter of the Indian Congress leader now serving four years' rigorous imprisonment.



# DELEGATES in DISCUSSION

## Points from Speeches

### *Mr. Rothwell, Merseyside:*

ON BEHALF OF Merseyside, and more particularly on behalf of the largest building job in the area, I wish to present what all of us, as working people, think is a most important phase of the struggle against the Government and the present system—the wages struggle.

We feel, and we have a strong Stewards' Committee which represents 10,000 men, it is time the building trade workers were removed from the casual list and came forward for a demand of 3d. per hour increase all round.

The rise in wages which some of us have had is a false rise. We have rather suffered a reduction, which we have not seen because we have been doped by overtime. It is time we forgot about overtime and got down to the basic job of demanding a 3d. per hour increase.

### *Pat Sloan, Russia Today Society:*

THE GOVERNMENT is pursuing a warlike policy towards the Soviet Union. Quite apart from the fact that it was ready to send troops to Finland to fight against the Red Army, we have today in this country a Government at war with the Soviet Union, the Polish Government, with an Army and an Air Force in this country which are pledged to war against the Soviet Union with the approval of the Churchill Government.

Add to that the closing of the Burma Road and the cutting off of Soviet supplies to China; add to that the seizure of the Baltic gold reserve and ships; and now forcing Baltic seamen to sail the seas under the Union Jack when by rights they should be sailing under the Red Flag.

Add to that Mr. Dalton's threatened blockade measures against the U.S.S.R. and the references to Moscow and Bloomsbury interfering in the affairs of Britain—and threatening Moscow.

Is it not clear that only a People's Government is going to achieve that friendship with the U.S.S.R. which we need?

### *Miss Selson, University Labour Federation:*

Education is in complete chaos. In the Universities and the working-class schools of this country we are getting an increasing demand for militarisation. We are having to sacrifice the cultural side of education in the universities and they are cutting the lectures and are generally curtailing the normal functions of the universities, while the Youth Service Campaign is trying to militarise the youth.

This Convention is going to prove a great inspiration to the students of this country. They are not going to support reaction as in Germany and Italy, but are on the side of the working class for a People's Government and a People's Peace.

### *Sam Henderson, Glasgow Transport and General Workers' Union:*

I REPRESENT the Glasgow transport workers here, today and might I say that this People's Convention could not have happened at a more opportune time. It is becoming more and more realised today among very many workers that the war will be paid for by the workers while we have the Government of the ruling class in power.

Therefore it behoves us to put in every possible effort before this war brings the country to destruction to put this Government out and end the war for the benefit of the people.

In Glasgow we have had a bitter fight in regard to the running times during the black-out period and we have been successful in being able to get appropriate running times, because we fought all the way.

Likewise on the question of running during the alert. We have had the Glasgow ruling class using the capitalist press and the whole capitalist machine calling the Glasgow transport workers yellow and traitors because they refused to run during the alert during black-out hours.

We took the attitude that until such times as the Government and the Corporation, which has a Labour majority, give the maximum protection to the workers, then we would not tolerate taking the risk not only by the drivers and the conductors but also by the general travelling public.

## *R. Palme Dutt, Communist Party:*

ON BEHALF of the Central Committee of the Communist Party I bring the warmest greetings and the wholehearted support of our Party to this Convention of people's representatives, and pledge the devoted work of our membership to assist in the realisation of the decisions which we shall reach at our assembly today.

We fling aside with contempt the charges that are being brought in the enemy press against this Convention, about Communist manœuvres and Communist conspiracies, and those who use this kind of argument against the unity of the working-class and democratic forces; this was Hitler's argument in Germany; this is the favourite argument of Fascism and the friends of Fascism in all countries. Whoever uses that argument is branded.

We have had enough of eloquent perorations about the glorious new world after the war. It is the present crisis that must be tackled. Our rulers will not do it for us. Their whole record condemns them. The official Labour leadership have shown themselves equally bankrupt with the corrupt allies of a bankrupt ruling class.

There is only one way. The big propertied interests which stand in the way of the people and plunder the people must be swept aside. The Communist Party supports the aim of the People's Government, pledged to carry out the programme of the united movement of the people as decided in the People's Convention.

We declare that a People's Peace is possible and can be won by the united struggle of all the peoples in the warring countries. The advance of the working people's struggle already in France, in Germany, in Italy, in the United States, in India and the Colonies, shows that the forces of the people are warring for the realisation of a People's Peace. From this great Convention let us send our message of greetings of solidarity to our brothers and comrades, the working people of Germany, the Indian people and all the Colonial peoples and the people of the Socialist Soviet Union. International working-class solidarity lives and will conquer.

We are convinced that only the working class can finally end war and poverty and bring socialism. We see in a People's Government the first step forward to curb the big propertied interests, extend democracy and give freedom to the people.

There is no room for illusion of easy victory. The months before us, as the war opens out and the attacks of the enemies of the people develop, will bring heavy trials and new dangers, making more urgent than ever our programme. Against the threats and attacks of our enemies let us swear to protect with all the power at our command the rights of the working-class movement, the shop stewards, the militant workers, the Com-

munist Party and the working-class Press, with, in the forefront, the *Daily Worker*. Our struggle will only be carried to victory if it is based, above all, on the factories and large industry. This Convention is only a beginning. The struggle before us will require the unity, determination, sacrifice and heroism of millions of people.

### ***F. H. Hedges, London Post Office Engineers***

I BRING THE greetings of the London District Committee of the Post Office Engineers' Union, and I am endeavouring to represent the delegates of the other London branches.

The present Government has rejected our claim for increased cost of living bonus to prevent a national lead being given and a signal to the outside employers to go against the demands of engineering workers.

It may interest members of unions outside the Post Office to know that we are paid on the sliding scale, and I myself, after 16 years in the Post Office Engineering, have not yet reached the maximum rate, and that the minimum for skilled workmen is 40/6 in the provinces and 43/6 in London. These are the things which we are fighting against.

On the question of civil liberties we have suffered from restrictions since the 1927 Trades Disputes Act severed us from the main body of Trade Union organisation, and we have had to function as a Trade Union registered under the Friendly Society Acts. We feel that our place is in the working-class and democratic organisations, and to get back in our rightful place we demand the assistance of Trade Unions within the T.U.C.

### ***A Soldier:***

I would like to appeal for more of the burning questions in the armed forces to be taken up by the trade unionists. It is a crying shame that men with wives and children, who before the war were earning, say, 2/6 an hour now receive 2/6 per day; at the end of the week he gets his 10/-, and has to go up and salute for it, by the time he pays the exorbitant fares to any place of amusement, and has a drink on Friday night, he is skint. Therefore our demand is, and I hope it will be expressed by this Convention, that soldiers' pay is 5/- a day and not 2/6.

### ***W. Paynter, South Wales Miners' Federation:***

AS A CONSEQUENCE of the development of the war, South Wales, and South Wales mining valleys, are experiencing poverty, more desperate than has been our previous experience and, as delegates realise, experience of poverty and misery are not unknown to the people of South Wales.



The South Wales mining industry—the industry upon which the bulk of our people depend for their existence, is in a state of chronic chaos and disorder.

Some 50,000 of our men have been rendered unemployed as a consequence of the collapse of the export trade, the mismanagement by the people responsible, and the attitude adopted both by the coal-owners and Government. The rest of our men who are employed still work on short time—four days a week is common.

But we are proud to be able to say that the South Wales Miners' Federation, through its Executive Council, despite organised pressure from the Trades Union Congress General Council and the National Executive Council, through its association with this Convention, will take the initiative in developing the campaign in South Wales, deriving much inspiration from the experiences and discussion at this Convention.

### ***Mrs. Robinson, Barrow Co-operative Party:***

I AM PROUD to say that there are nine delegates from the Barrow-in-Furness Co-operative Party.

Just as our Trade Union movement and other working-class organisations are in very grave danger from our present Government, the Co-operative Movement also is in very grave danger.

During the last war, in 1917, because of the way the Co-operative Movement had been treated in the matter of supplies, a Co-operative Political Party was formed. Since then they have told us that if ever war took place again, because we had now established a political party and had so many Co-operative M.P.s in Parliament, there would never be that same danger.

But those of us who are active in the movement can see that today the Co-operative Movement is in 100 per cent graver danger.

We have been told since the New Year came in that there will be less to eat. Lord Woolton told us, after having done well at luncheon, that the meat rations were going to be reduced. But, he said, wouldn't you rather have less meat and more Bardia's? Well, I don't know whether a lump of Bardia would be easier to digest, but I say we don't want Bardia. Bardia belongs to the Bardian people. But we do want some meat.

And I want to say to you men and women here, and particularly to the womenfolk, that if meat and foodstuff is going to be difficult to get, then we are going to rally the support of the Trade Unionists and, if we cannot have sufficient food to keep our men in a healthy state, we are going to say: "Come out on strike." We are no longer going to be gulled by the fact that these things are necessary because we are at war, while the refrigerators of the rich are stocked with food.

In conclusion, I am going to say this: That my appeal is to the Co-operative Movement as a whole. Its great distributing machinery, its great educational facilities and propaganda can be used in the interests of the working class to help us to bring into being what we have come here today to help bring about, what the Rochdale Pioneers thought they were setting in motion, and that is a true People's Co-operative Commonwealth.

### ***John Sutherland, Fife and Kinross Miners:***

Scottish miners have a very strong delegation here today. The Lanarkshire Miners' Union, representing 25,000 miners, are officially represented, with several branch delegates from various parts of the Scottish coalfield.

Miners have a special interest in the Convention. Despite the war-wage increase the miners are still suffering as a result of low wages. And now we have a new situation facing us. A new crisis has developed in the mining industry. Not after the war but right in the midst of the present war. Thousands of miners have become unemployed, pits are closing down, and short time is prevalent in many parts of the British coalfield. This crisis within the mining industry exposes the class policy of the present Government.

All this takes place when people all over the country are without coal. It is, therefore, in the interests of the miners and the mass of the people in this country that the present Government should be removed and replaced with a People's Government that will defend the interests of the people as a whole.

Take another question, the supply of food. The position is appalling all over the Scottish coalfield. Everyone knows that the hard and dangerous occupations demand an adequate supply of food. This is refused to miners by the present Government representing the profiteers. Lord Woolton, the representative of big business and Minister of Food Supply, has already informed the Scottish miners' unions that the miners are receiving enough food. This is the same man who says potatoes must be our staple diet. Of course, this is for our class and not for the class of Lord Woolton.

It is our action, therefore, that will decide whether or not we shall have more food. The Scottish miners' unions have already approached the Scottish Co-operative Movement for co-operation on this question of the shortage of food.

### ***Krishna Menon, India:***

I AM GRATEFUL to the National Committee of the People's Convention for the opportunity accorded to address this

momentous gathering and to register the solidarity of a vast number of people whom the British Government have not only exploited but have also misrepresented.

A number of messages have been read to the Conference by the Secretary but there are a great number which are absent because the men who could and would have sent them are in Britain's prisons, arising from the conflict of their interpretation of the "fight for freedom." The foremost is Nehru who has been sentenced to four years, because of his defence of the rights for freedom. We are not impressed by such things as "democratic imperialism," there is no such thing, as there is no such thing as a vegetarian tiger.

The spirit of the Indian people is with this Convention. The People of India are in a mighty struggle, but they need no sympathy. We stand together in a common cause to end a common enemy, and that enemy is imperialism. There is no use in asking whether would you choose British imperialism or Nazism, it is like asking a fish if he wants to be fried in margarine or butter. He doesn't want to be fried at all!

People have different ideas of "fighting for freedom." Our interpretation is ending the tyranny which we know as imperialism.

We want a new order which will bring social justice to the People of India and the people all over the world. The task before us, therefore, is to join hands with people in other parts of the world, China, India and the Soviet Union to bring about new social ideas and social justices. It has been said that peace would mean surrender to Fascism. It means nothing of the kind. Therefore it is our business to go forward with a programme to the people of this country to organise their power and to stand foursquare in the struggle for equality and freedom, as it is as much theirs as ours.

### *Councillor Craig Walker, Leeds:*

THIS CONVENTION shows that whatever the official Labour attitude may be there is in the rank and file of the Labour movement a feeling similar to that about those who 100 years ago set the flag flying as Chartists.

A similar feeling is awaiting to be expressed. I don't want this Convention to be just a safety valve. Rather this should be the jumping-off point for the whole working-class movement.

It is to the workers in the factories, the bricklayers, the street-sweepers, that our message should go forth.

The representatives of socialism now collaborating with the National Government have turned away from their colleagues and comrades who put them in their positions and made them what they are. This is the most shameful thing that ever took place.

This is a meeting of the workers of this country sending its message throughout the world to other peoples.

### *Steve Lawther, Tyneside:*

ON BEHALF OF the North-East delegation representing industrial, technical and scientific workers from the Tyneside, Weir and Tees, we pledge ourselves to carry out what is outlined in the resolution now before us.

Out of this war, like the last, we are promised a brave new world.

But after the last war in the North-East we had a derelict Tyneside, and a derelict Durham with the Means Test.

In the Durham coalfields we had a lengthening of the miners' hours after a period of 60 years. This was the "new world" we found after the last war. Everyone knows, that unless we fight now, this war will have similar results.

Today there are more than 30,000 miners unemployed in Durham, and thousands of men on short time. The owners handed out the notices—the boss is still boss, and the miners are the recipients of the notices that meant the Means Test.

The spokesman of the coalowners, the *Colliery Guardian*, recently said in advocating measures for dealing with the present wages situation: "There is something to be said for Nazi methods"; and that is the real voice of British imperialism.

However, Durham has given the lead demanding the nationalisation of the mining industry, which must mean complete people's control.

### *Mr. Warman, Coventry:*

I AM HERE as a representative of the Coventry Trade Union and Labour Party Emergency Committee that was thrown up as a result of the devastation that was brought about in Coventry.

I do not believe that it is possible for me to paint an exact picture of the position in Coventry after the raiders had given us that visit. But it is enough to say that practically the whole of the social amenities of the city were broken down. That Coventry was as near an example of the ruins of Pompeii as any

city in a modern civilisation could ever be. The whole of the people were without water, gas, electricity or any of the amenities which are essential to a modern civilised town, for several weeks.

The suffering of the people immediately after the raid was something that is indescribable. Many people went without food for days, and the whole distribution of the food services broke down.

When those of us of the Trade Union movement who were in the city realised the state of affairs, we came to the conclusion that it was time for the workers to begin to take a share in organising and putting forward the demands of the suffering people of Coventry.

We saw what had been the result of the failure to provide adequate bomb-proof protection. Therefore we felt it was essential that we too should be linked up behind the demand of Point 2 in the programme for adequate bomb-proof protection.

We saw how the people were allowed to remain homeless; how they were sleeping, many of them in air raid shelters, in pig sties in the country, in any old lorry they could get into, and we realised that the demand for the taking over of the mansions and hotels of the rich was one we could support.

The position as a result of this tremendous attack upon Coventry is that we in Coventry are beginning to realise that the whole purpose of this Government is not in the interests of the working people, but in the interests of the wealthy. Also, we have realised that it is the people who are suffering while the Government is concerned with profits and that it cannot be changed until the people themselves take power.

### ***Mr. Scanlon, Metro Vickers:***

MR. CHAIRMAN, Comrades and Friends. I bring you greetings from the engineers of what is probably the largest engineering factory in Manchester, also from the Convention Committee in the Lancashire and Cheshire area.

As engineers, we welcome the proposition of an economic programme; we see the chaos and mismanagement as only engineers can recognise, and we well know that only the establishment of an economic programme by the people themselves can solve this difficulty.

We consider the really important part of the Convention Programme is the organising of reporting back meetings. We have taken steps to bring about a meeting of all militant shop stewards, and we hope we will get a mass meeting for the Manchester district of the Union which will establish a real basis for the full



backing of the organisations for the People's Convention Programme and the establishment of a People's Government.

### ***The Rev. Bryn Thomas, Swindon:***

CHAIRMAN AND Fellow Delegates. I bring you greetings from the Swindon and West of England area and I associate myself with this resolution now before this Convention for a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

It is time that we who have been associated with organised religion in this land were coming to the fore to say that we are profoundly dissatisfied and even disgusted with the policy that has been propounded so far in the name of the British people.

The economic system has already failed us. "Ledger wealth" will have to go and real wealth, which means men and material, will have to come into its own. Mr. Morrison tried to pour cold water on this Convention by saying that it was a Communist movement. I have made a study of the Communist Party programme, and as a Christian and a vicar in the Church of England I am convinced that unless the people of Britain will win as an ally the Soviet Union, we will be relegated to the limbo of the past.

### ***Mrs. Alison McLeod, Somerset:***

COMRADES, Factory Workers, Builders, Engineers. I want to tell you the landworkers are coming in on your side. The workers on the farms are waking up. In my district, six months ago, there was no organisation. Now the men know that by organisation they can get a better Government.

There is no industry so badly run, so much dependent on vested interests, as the land. You cannot get food in the shops, you cannot get onions, etc., but the land can produce sufficient for the people if it is run for the people, by collectivisation.

### ***Mr. Parry, London Shelterers' Committee:***

I SHOULD LIKE to place before you the appalling conditions of shelterers from bombing. Most of the London delegates will remember when this blitz started on the Empire's capital that the whole of the civilian population of the metropolitan area were unprovided for in respect of deep air raid shelters.

Anderson shelters for home use were infinitesimal in number. Thousands, nay, millions, of workers were expected to carry out



their daily tasks, to run all the risks of destruction of life whilst at work, and then return to their homes at night to go through the whole of the noise when the life-destroying bombs were hurled on the defenceless workers.

The workers, in face of official opposition, took the case into their own hands and obtained possession of the London tubes for the purpose of preserving life.

Conditions have improved very little and every step for improvement has to be fought out either with the local council or the Ministry of Home Security. We are badgered about from pillar to post, and with a People's Government I believe we should secure the justice which this situation demands. In the meantime I suggest this Convention registers its emphatic protest and demands bomb-proof shelters fit for workers. We know it can be done, as, for instance, those below Windsor Castle and Whitehall. This demand I make on behalf of the entire London Tube Shelter Committees.

### ***Mr. F. Anderson, Parkhead Forge, Glasgow:***

Fellow Workers! I hope that when all our comrades go back to the workshop, although they may have thought in the past that they have done a great deal of work, they have a duty, and that is to do more work for better conditions and a better life. Though we have never yet had a proper chance to build a new country, we can do it, and do it well. Thank you, everyone in this hall.

### ***Representative of Engineering and Allied Trades Shop Stewards' National Council:***

The hot reception given to Bevin at Glasgow and Coventry shows that workers are demanding, or commencing to demand, some of those things this Convention stands for. The shop stewards are the key to the revitalisation of the movement, and upon them falls the leadership in the shops, trade union branches and for building real Trades Councils.

We engineers have to create the broad organisation to achieve our aims. Factories must link up with each other, locally with the area committees and nationally with the Engineering National Council and similar movements must be created in other industries.

Comrades, our guarantee of success is to build and strengthen the shop stewards' movement and draw the working class into the broader political movement which is represented in this wonderful and inspiring People's Convention.

## *Rose Silkman, Young Communist League:*

WE YOUNG PEOPLE feel that there is no need to draw your attention to the bad conditions that are facing the young workers in the factories, but that it is necessary to draw your attention to the Government's scheme to control youth and organise them for their reactionary policy. This is the greatest threat to organised workers.

Money is being spent to organise the youth of this country in Youth Service Corps. Everything is being done to make this scheme look as rosy as possible, in order that the youth will be attracted to it. But if this plan is successful it will be a blow to the organised working class.

And I am sure that everyone here realises that without winning the support of the young people your plans for winning a People's Government will become much more difficult. For if it is worth while for the Government to pay such attention to youth to win them for its policy it is equally worth while for the people in the factories and trade unions to win them. The young people are prepared to struggle and respond to the call of the people and will really fight for the things they think worth while.

## *Councillor Frank Davies, Ammanford, South Wales:*

I HAVE COME from Ammanford in South Wales to speak on behalf mostly of the unemployed miners there. Perhaps it will surprise some of you to know in an orbit of five miles we have at least 3,000 miners unemployed. Where I was billeted last night, they informed me that they were paying as much as 3/5 per cwt. of coal, yet there are thousands of miners unemployed who are prepared to give them that coal if we had a decent system of society and government.

There are 800,000 unemployed in this country at the present time. Do not forget them.

## *A Soldier:*

I WANT TO THANK this Convention for giving me the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the civilians in uniform.

The first thing a soldier thinks about is his food. And that is the first thing I want to talk about. We come up to breakfast,

to dinner or to tea with bated breath. That's a fact. If our worst fears are realised, its brown stew, fish cake, or German sausage—or, as we call it, Hitler's secret weapon.

The food is good and the cooks good fellows, but when it comes to us it really is not eatable. Five of our lads recently waited over a quarter of an hour for their dinner—when they got it, they looked at it and refused to eat it. They were asked why they hadn't eaten it, taken before the major and given extra duties—for not eating their dinner!

On the question of freedom. Our lads entered the Army asking, "Where's that fellow, Hitler?" One lad comes in who has been to Winchester College. Speaks as though he had a plum in his mouth. Just about knows his right hand from his left. But after three weeks he is seen having dinner in a local hotel with one of the majors. The next day he wears a stripe and is nominated for a commission. The fellows ask, why is this? Winchester College and he has a father who went to school with the major. The lads are getting what we call "browned-off."

Leave is the most pathetic thing you can imagine. It is a privilege and not a right. You are in the army for a certain period and must go through a certain period of training. If you pass your tests you get 4 days' leave—if you don't you are not going to get it. The lads sweat like mad to get leave, and perhaps are not very good at something or another. Out of a squad of 28 men, 8 were sent back. Everyone of us have a right to leave and it ought to be organised regularly.

We support a Democratic Government and hope a government of that character will be put in so that we can have a square deal in the army.

### *Harry Pollitt, Communist Party:*

IN THE EARLY months of 1911 our veteran leader, Tom Mann, in Manchester started a small movement of militant trade unionists and under the slogan of forging the weapon went from one end of the country to the other on his own and was responsible for a campaign that at the back end of 1911 and throughout 1912 resulted in the greatest mass movement among the railwaymen, miners, dockers, seamen and transport workers that this country has ever seen.

Today we have forged a weapon and that weapon we have now to use and be proud to use in the way that we organise

the working men and women of this country and all those who are in sympathy with them for the realisation of the policy programme of this Convention. That Policy Programme is no paper programme. We have the responsibility of organising such a reporting campaign that this country has never known before, one that will spread in every factory, trade union branch and trades council, one that will reflect itself in delegates challenging every hostile expression in their local newspapers, one that our regional committees will organise mass demonstrations in the principal cities of this country the like of which has never been seen before. For the essence of this Convention is not only talk, it is now the bringing of the masses into action by every possible manner of means, because it is a race against time, a race between those who are represented by this Convention standing for life, progress and construction, and those represented by the Government and their allies whose only outlook is death and destruction.

What I ask you at this historical moment is not to let this Convention merely to have been a place where steam was let off. Let it represent the gathering of those in deadly seriousness, determined, confident men and women who do not want to see the defeat of this country, but who want to see the victory of the people of this country over its real enemies in the Churchill Government and the policy it is pursuing at the present moment. We are the real custodians of the interests of the British people.

My final word is a memory: There was a Convention organised in Leeds in 1917. Every thug and gangster was carried into Leeds to smash up the delegates and the Convention. Soldiers were brought from the barracks in order to throw missiles at the delegates in order to prevent the Convention from being held. The leading speakers had to be protected by workers' bodyguards from the violence of these mobs. Yet we have held a Convention in three halls in London in 1941. The soldiers are with us; not one hostile voice is raised from the real working-class movement against us.

When we are united we are powerful. Let us be proud of our power and use it. The Churchill Government will be removed and a Government giving realisation to the programme and policy you are deciding today, will be brought to power.

*H. Verralis, E.T.U., Shop Steward:*

Propaganda meetings are gone by the board, but in the shops themselves and on the job, with sufficient initiative, we can have a better attendance than we could at the branches. On the job

I am on at present, every member turned up when I was elected as a delegate to this Convention. I never remember every member of the Branch turning up to the Branch!

We and the people who support the Convention have been against Hitler since Hitler came into the newspapers. We have always been against Hitler and his kind, and the only real way to defeat Hitler is with the instruments of the working people, that is, by taking the affairs of State into our hands in a way that will make the defeat of all Hitlers possible and practicable.

### ***Guy Reeves, member of a Local Authority:***

I ask the delegates here, in face of the ravages of the war-mongers (which many of us have witnessed this week-end in London for the first time), to get the workers in their respective localities to insist that the local authorities provide adequate air raid protection for the people.

It is not generally known that local authorities can no longer play off the demands of the people by the plea that they will have to bear the brunt of the expense locally. Every local authority can now draw up its own air raid protection plans and go forward with decent schemes if they desire to do so. Hundreds of local authorities will now be prepared, with pushing from behind, to protest, and I ask the elected representatives of the people to take full control of their own A.R.P. defences.

It is not sufficient to demand from the local authorities that they should provide these things—it ought to be sufficient, but, unfortunately, it isn't. Our job when we go back to the provinces is to organise all the factories, in the streets, and in the schools, and to take demonstrations of the people to the local authorities, whoever they may be.

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*(The names of organisations are given purely as a matter of information.)*

# MESSAGES of Support

**A**LTOGETHER, 75 organisations and individuals sent messages of greeting and support to the People's Convention. Of these, 44 came from the American continent, the West Indies and Canada.

We have space to select only four from the large and encouraging list, and reproduce here the messages from

**PAUL ROBESON**, world-famous Negro singer:

"All my warmest greetings to the People's Convention. I feel strange not being there to do my bit with you.

"From here we eagerly follow your courageous struggle for the freedom and well-being, not only of the English, but of all people.

"What you are doing is magnificent. Carry on." *Salud.*"

**THEODORE DREISER**, America's greatest living novelist, author of "An American Tragedy":

"Warmly and hopefully I salute the People's Convention. For I keenly desire that the money, privilege and power of the imperialist group that now controls England and the British Empire should be replaced by a People's Government—a Government of the workers and farmers and clerks of England—and no others."

**WEST INDIES NATIONAL COUNCIL:**

"We greet your historic Convention. We urge the liberation of the West Indies, Africa, India and other Colonies. We also welcome your condemnation of the segregation of races in London air-raid shelters."—DOMINGO, *President*.

**CLIFFORD T. McAVOY**, Chairman of the Council for Pan-American Democracy:



"The Council for Pan-American Democracy greets your historic Convention, wishing success to the deliberations. Your programme of independence for the Colonies of the British Empire corresponds with the aspirations of the people of the West Indies.

"Latin American people under the plight of foreign domination consider the fate of the West Indies as their own. In the Western hemisphere the principles of liberation must be defended, else the fundamentals of democracy will be desecrated.

"We are certain the Convention reaffirms the liberties of Colonial countries and expresses further unity with the oppressed peoples of the world."

**MAO TSE-TUNG**, leader of the Chinese Communist Party, cabled from Chungking:

"The Chinese Communist Party expresses its fraternal militant Party greetings to the British People's Convention which consolidates and leads the people of the British working class and toiling masses and all progressive elements to carry on the campaign for peace and democracy, for the realisation of a programme of political and economic democratic reconstruction, and the establishment of a People's Government amid ever-spreading and ruthless imperialist war.

"The British people, under the leadership of the Convention, will be assured of their victory and success.

"Out of hunger, unemployment, suppression, they will march towards peace and democracy through heroic struggles.

"The great Chinese people have experienced three-and-a-half years of heroic war of liberation and will continue with ever more solidarity fighting and crushing Japanese imperialism and its lackeys for a new democratic country.

"Hoping for a strengthening of international militant solidarity between the British and Chinese peoples."

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## W. Zak, Finance Committee

As has already been mentioned by Mr. Squance in his speech, we need a stable income, we need an income of £250 a week to ensure the running of the National Committee and Regional Committees. A movement with a future which offers so much to the people cannot be without money.

We are asking you for £250 a week, which means that 60,000 people have got to guarantee the sum of 1d. per week. It is possible if we really put our backs into it to get a million people guaranteeing a penny.

As soon as the Convention is over, the National Committee will issue a Registered Supporters' Card at the price of 1s.—the share going as usual, 50 per cent to the National Committee and 50 per cent to the localities and on which provision will be made for Registered Supporters to guarantee weekly or monthly contributions.

We have to make one final point—the National Committee is responsible for all money raised in the name of the Convention. We ask delegates from Regional and local committees to bear that in mind; we ask them to go from the Convention determined to see that the money that is needed will be raised.

(A collection was then taken, which, from all halls, totalled £480, excluding IOU's.)

## National Committee's Statement of Account

July 1st 1940 to January 9th 1941

### EXPENSES

Postage and Carriage .. ..	240	18	0	
Telephone and Telegrams .. ..	18	6	5	
Office Stationery .. ..	141	12	8	
Office Sundries .. ..	4	8	8½	
Office Rent .. ..	58	7	0	
				463 12 9½
Wages and National Insurance	214	3	9	
Volunteers' Expenses .. ..	10	16	8	
Fares and Travelling Expenses	76	5	3½	
Miscellaneous Expenses .. ..	58	12	5	
				359 18 1½
Propaganda Material .. ..	1,100	9	9	
Conferences and Meetings .. ..	226	10	6	
Advertising .. ..	49	12	8	
				1,376 12 11
				<u>£2,200 3 10</u>

# INCOME

Donations .. ..	775	3	4			
Collections at Meetings ..	220	15	8			
				995	19	0
Sales of Propaganda Material ..				549	1	7
Miscellaneous Receipts ..	14	18	6			
Delegates' Expense Fund ..	21	5	0			
				36	3	6
Delegate Fees .. ..				198	15	0
NET INCOME DEFICIENCY for the period ..				420	4	9
				£2,200	3	10

# CASH AND CREDITORS

Outstanding Debts—including in above Expenses (Propaganda Material £760) ..	995	7	8
Cash in hand and in C.W.S. Bank ..	575	2	11
DEFICIENCY (as above)	£420	4	9

NOTE.—The Accounts of the National Committee have not yet been audited and this Statement, whilst it is believed to be correct, must be regarded as provisional.  
On behalf of the Hon. Treasurer:

WILLIAM ZAK / Members of Finance  
TOM GLADSTONE Sub-Committee

LONDON, January 9th, 1941.

# RESOLUTIONS

as amended and passed.

## I. POLICY and PROGRAMME

**W**E, the 2,234 delegates of 1,304 organisations, representing 1,200,000 workers assembled in the first meeting of the People's Convention in London on 12th of January, 1941

### DECLARE OUR CONVICTION

that the present Government represents the interests of the rich;

that only the unity and active struggle of the working people in their own interests, and the establishment of a People's Government truly representative of the working people, can save them from the disasters and sufferings which the war is bringing upon them.

### WE ACCUSE THE GOVERNMENT AND THE RULING CLASS OF THIS COUNTRY OF

bearing a heavy responsibility for this war by their entire policy since 1918;

carrying on the war for aims of reactionary class interests and world domination, contrary to the interests of the people, placing all the burdens of the war upon the people, and forcing down their standard of living, while piling up profits for their own class;

destroying democratic and trade union rights;

fostering racial hatred among peoples;

opposing the just, democratic demands of India and the colonial peoples of the British Empire;

neglecting adequate air raid protection of the people;

promoting hostility to the Soviet Union; and

generally pursuing policies which are leading the people to catastrophe.

## WE PROCLAIM THE RIGHT OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

to a full, free and happy life, which can only be won if wars are brought to an end by uprooting their causes, and if our labour and skill are devoted to producing the things we need and distributing them among all.

## WE THEREFORE RESOLVE to fight for the following

### PROGRAMME

1. To raise the living standards of the people, including wages, pay of armed and civil defence forces, dependants' allowances, all pensions, compensation, insurance and unemployment allowances, and the restoration and extension of educational facilities.
2. Adequate A.R.P. bomb-proof shelters, and prompt and effective provision for all the needs of air raid victims, including re-housing and full and immediate compensation.
3. Restoration, safeguarding and extension of all Trade Union rights and democratic rights and civil liberties. Effective democratic rights for members of the armed forces.
4. Emergency powers to be used to take over the banks, land, transport, armaments and other large industries in order to organise our economic life in the interests of the people.
5. National Independence for India, the right of all Colonial peoples to determine their own destiny, and the ending of enforced partition of Ireland.
6. Friendship with the U.S.S.R.
7. A People's Government truly representative of the working people, and able to command the confidence of working people throughout the world.
8. A People's Peace, won by the working people of all countries, and based on the right of all peoples to determine their own destiny.

WE CALL on all working men, women and youth, on all professional workers, on all those interested in peace and progress, to unite to fight for this programme in order by their solidarity and action to impose their majority will on the ruling class and secure their own Government.

WE CALL on all Labour, Co-operative and trade union organisations, and all mass organisations of the working people, to unite their ranks and combine their endeavours to organise this common fight for the victory of this programme.

WE PLEDGE OURSELVES, the delegates of the People's Convention here assembled, to spread the message of the People's Convention, and to organise and extend the mighty movement of the people for the realisation of this programme.

AND WE APPOINT AND MANDATE our National Committee, the elected representatives of the people, to carry forward the campaign, build up the organisation of the movement, promote mass demonstrations and all other activities in accordance with the programme; recall the People's Convention, and in all ways lead the struggle to the victory of a People's Government and a People's Peace.

LET THE PEOPLE HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THEIR OWN STRENGTH  
THE PEOPLE ALONE CAN SAVE THE PEOPLE.

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## 2. ORGANISATION & CAMPAIGN

**W**E, the delegates elected by the people, assembled at this first meeting of the People's Convention held in London on January 12, 1941, solemnly resolve to carry forward to achievement the Policy and Programme framed and endorsed by us at this historic gathering.

We pledge ourselves to support and assist every form of struggle of the working people for better conditions of life, the struggle of the workers in industry for higher wages and better conditions and for shorter hours, the housewives' struggle against the high cost of living, the tenants' struggle against high rents and bad housing conditions, the struggle of youth, women, mothers, small shopkeepers, land workers, office workers, civil servants, members of the armed forces and their dependants.

We declare that a People's Government can and will be secured by the united and determined efforts of the working-class and progressive people. To this end we pledge ourselves to organise the united mass movement of the people in the struggle for the aims contained in our programme and to win our organisations for full support.

We will work to strengthen and revitalise the trade union movement. To maintain trade union democracy, to end the policy of subordinating the interests of the working class to the interests of the Government and the employers, and to assist every effort of the trade unions for the betterment of working-class standards, the express purpose for which they were brought into



existence. To strengthen and revitalise the Trades Councils in order that they will be effective co-ordinating bodies in every locality for the Trade Union movement. By assisting to build up and extend the shop stewards' and workshop organisation we recognise that the hands of the workers will be strengthened by a most powerful weapon of struggle.

We will work to strengthen the Co-operative movement as the means of safeguarding the supplies of essential commodities for the people and combating profiteering. At the same time we will work to safeguard the interests of the small shopkeeper, small farmer and consumer.

We will aim to win the mass of the Labour Party members and Divisional Labour Parties to support the struggle for a People's Government and to end the policy of collaboration between the Labour Party leadership and the ruling class.

We pledge ourselves to achieve the unity of the organised working-class and all progressive people in a mighty movement for a People's Government. To seek co-operation with all progressive associations and organisations for this purpose.

To assist in every form, working-class struggle for improvement of wages and conditions and for the advance of education, art and entertainment.

We recognise that the accomplishment of the historic task lying before us needs the accumulation and responsible use of sufficient cash resources. Though every penny will represent a sacrifice, we have confidence in the willingness of the common people to build and sustain their own movement. We pledge ourselves to devote unrelenting energy to the collection of funds so that the work of the National Committee and its Regional Committees may never be crippled or halted for lack of essential cash. We charge the National Committee with responsibility for supervising the best employment of all funds raised in the name of the People's Convention for the realisation of its programme.

This First Session of the People's Convention decides to elect a National Committee with full responsibility to conduct the campaign. Regional Committees will be elected on the broadest possible basis at Regional People's Conventions under the direction of the National Committee. Regional Committees will have the responsibility to assist to develop the campaign in the localities through whatever form of united organisation and action can be achieved in a given locality.

This First Session of the People's Convention will stand adjourned to be recalled in order to carry forward the campaign for a People's Government.

# DELEGATES PRESENT

## Organisations and People Represented

### Credentials Committee Report

2,234 Delegates directly representing 1,200,000, of which 1,136 delegates represented 1,004,950 in Trade Unions and Factories and on Jobs; made up as follows:

<i>No. of Delegates</i>	<i>Elected from</i>	<i>Representing</i>
471	239 Factories and Jobs .. ..	400,000
87	138 Engineering and Metal Trade Unions .. ..	67,680
31	26 Miners' Trade Unions .. ..	270,000
94	65 Building Workers .. ..	27,900
153	86 Transport (Road & Rail Unions)	45,450
22	11 Furnishing Trade Workers' Unions	12,800
95	47 Clerical, Distributive and Ad- ministrative Unions .. ..	52,800
26	20 General Workers' Unions ..	4,500
55	55 Electrical Workers' Unions ..	6,500
75	29 Various Trades Union organisa- tions (including Tailoring, Printing and Firemen) .. ..	24,650
27	20 Trades and Trades and Labour Councils .. ..	<u>92,673</u>

1,136 Delegates directly representing 1,004,953 workers  
(Included in the above figures of Trade Union organisations are  
4 Executive Committees and 15 District Councils or  
Committees.)

<i>No. of Delegates</i>	<i>Elected from</i>	<i>Representing</i>
99	89 Co-operative organisations .. ..	50,000
254	199 Political organisations .. .. (including Labour Party, Com- munist Party, Socialist Medical Assocs., Assocs. of Labour Teachers, Haldane Society, Women's Parliamentary Assocs., etc.)	38,500
17	12 Groups of Professional Workers	460
24	12 Colonial organisations .. ..	10,000
164	91 Youth organisations .. ..	20,000
261	131 People's Convention and Vigilance Committees, Conferences and Meetings* .. ..	
77	50 Tenants' Associations and Shelter Committees .. ..	118,000
23	14 Housewives Committees .. ..	1,500
113	75 Cultural, Educational and Discus- sion Groups .. ..	11,000
66	30 Miscellaneous organisations ..	30,000
<hr/> 2,234		<hr/> 1,284,413

\* Convention and Vigilance Committees cover every important area in England, Scotland and Wales, and are widely representative. For example, at the South Wales Conference 220,000 were represented, at the Midlands Conference 34,752 were represented. But as there is no means of telling how many people who attended these conferences or meetings sent delegates through other organisations, these figures are omitted from the total, although it is obvious that this leaves out a large number of people not in any organisation at all.

#### **People's Convention delegates grouped according to districts:**

London .. .. .	1,099
Lancashire and Cheshire .. .. .	290
Scotland .. .. .	117
South Wales .. .. .	100
North-East Coast .. .. .	97
Sheffield (including Notts and Derby) ..	95
Midlands .. .. .	87
Eastern Counties .. .. .	71
Leeds (including W. Riding) .. .. .	68
South Midlands .. .. .	67
Home Counties .. .. .	55
Hants and Dorset .. .. .	42
Bristol and Gloucester area .. .. .	34
South-West .. .. .	8
North Wales .. .. .	4

# STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Standing Orders Committee, to which all questions of speakers, amendments to resolutions and nominations for the new National Committee were referred, reported at length on its deliberations concerning the various questions which had been submitted by delegates.

## Policy Resolution Amendments :

Paragraph 3, line 7 (Workers' Circle Friendly Society)—After "rights," add "fostering racial hatred amongst peoples." (Agreed.)

Paragraph 1, line 3 (Art and Entertainments Profession)—Add after "allowances" the words "the restoration and extension of educational facilities."

Paragraph 2 (Tilbury Shelter Committee)—The proposed amendments were considered covered in paragraph 2.

Paragraph 3, line 2 (London Convention Council)—After "liberties" add "effective democratic rights for members of the armed forces." (Agreed.)

Paragraph 4, line 1 (London Convention Council)—After word "transport" insert "armaments and other large industries." (Agreed.)

## Organisation Resolution Amendments :

New Second Paragraph—After paragraph 1, insert: "We pledge ourselves to support and assist every form of struggle of the working people for better conditions of life, the struggle of the workers in industry for higher wages and better conditions and for shorter hours, the housewives' struggle against the high cost of living, the tenants' struggle against high rents and bad housing conditions, the struggle of youth, women, mothers, small shopkeepers, land workers, office workers, civil servants, members of the armed forces and their dependants."

Paragraph 6—Propose this should now read: "We pledge ourselves to achieve the unity of the organised working class and all progressive people in a mighty movement for a People's Government. To seek co-operation with all progressive associations and organisations for this purpose."

Paragraph 7—Should now read: “To assist in every form working-class struggle for improvement of wages and conditions and for the advance of education, art, and entertainment.”

## Amendments from the Southall Branch of the N.U.R.

Paragraph 1—Insert: “The arming of the working class under the control of the Trade Unions and Workers’ Committees.” Standing Orders Committee reply that this Convention is aimed towards the establishment of a People’s Government which will control the armed forces of the State.

Paragraph 4—Proposed amendment: “Nationalisation of banks, land, transport and large industries without compensation.” Standing Orders Committee consider this covered in principle in existing resolution.

Paragraph 6—Proposed to add: “Unconditional defence of the U.S.S.R. against capitalist attack.” Standing Orders Committee reply the People’s Convention stands for the most friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. in all circumstances.

Paragraph 7—“The immediate ending of the Party truce with the insistence on a campaign for Labour to take full power on the basis of this programme as the first step to the overthrow of the capitalist system and the seizure of power by the working class.” The Standing Orders Committee reply the People’s Movement has grown out of the opposition to the truce which the Labour Movement has entered into with the ruling class and has the strongest objection to the continuation of such a truce.

Paragraph 8—“A Socialist appeal to the German and European workers for the overthrow of their own capitalist class simultaneously with the struggle against British capitalism and the establishment of a United States of Socialist Europe.” Standing Orders Committee considers that it is the first business of the working class in each country to endeavour to organise for struggle against their own capitalist class. It is the intention that messages of solidarity shall be sent to all workers and those who support them in the fight for peace in the fascist countries, and such messages of solidarity will be effective only to the degree that we ourselves are doing our duty in our own country.

## National Committee

The Standing Orders Committee recommends that 26 be elected by this Convention to the National Committee, and that, in addition, two representatives be elected by each of the following

districts: Scotland, London, North-East Coast, Lancashire and Cheshire, Wales, Midlands, Yorkshire (including Sheffield and E. Yorks), West Riding, South-West England, South-East England, Eastern Counties, Home Counties.

With regard to the members elected from this Convention, the Standing Orders Committee makes the following recommendation:—

**Harry Adams, A.U.B.T.W.**

**W. J. R. Squance,**

A.S.L.E. & F

**D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P.**

**W. Zak, Furnishing Trades Association**

**R. Palme Dutt, Communist Party of Great Britain**

**W. Gallacher, M.P.**

**Dr. Barton**

**Lt.-Commander Young**

**Professor Haldane**

**Michael Best (Tenants' and Residents' Association)**

**Jack Owen, Manchester**

A.E.U.

**Councillor J. Craig-Walker (West Riding)**

**Arthur Horner, President S. Wales Miners' Federation**

**G. Dutch, London Co-op. Management Committee**

**J. E. Skilbeck, London A.S.W.**

**Councillor Mabel Lewis, South Wales**

**Krishna Menon**

(India League)

**Beatrix Lehmann**

**Rev. Stanley Evans**

**Jack Sussman (Youth)**

**Ben Frankel**

**Dean of Canterbury**

**W. Swanson, London A.E.U.**

**Wm. Pearson, Chairman Lanarkshire Miners' Union**

**Mary Baxter, Scottish Peace Council**

**Geo. Crane, A.E.U.**

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*(The names of organisations are given purely as a matter of information.)*

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*(The Standing Orders Committee Report was unanimously adopted by the Convention.)*





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*“We recognise that the accomplishment of the historic task lying before us needs the accumulation and responsible use of sufficient cash resources. Though every penny will represent a sacrifice, we have confidence in the willingness of the common people to build and sustain their own Movement. We pledge ourselves to devote unremitting energy to the collection of funds so that the work of the National Committee and its Regional Committees may never be crippled or halted for lack of essential cash. We charge the National Committee with responsibility for supervising the best employment of all funds raised in the name of the People’s Convention for the realisation of its programme.”—Extract from resolution on Organisation and Campaign.*



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